

Chapter 3: Mitigation Planning

3.1 Introduction

An important step in the lengthy process of improving resistance to natural hazards is the development of a Local Mitigation Strategy. The Monroe County LMS was prepared in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Florida Department of Community Affairs, and steps outlined in guidance documents for the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System.

The LMS serves several purposes. It sets the stage for long-term resistance to natural hazards through identification of actions that will, over time, reduce the exposure of people and property. Further, the LMS is required to be eligible for certain state and federal mitigation grant funds.

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 provide overviews of hazards that threaten the County, estimates of the people and property exposed to hazards, the planning process, how hazards are recognized in the local government processes and functions, and priority mitigation action items. The hazard summary and disaster history help to characterize future hazards. When the magnitude of past events, the number of people and properties affected, and the severity of damage, hurricanes and coastal storm flooding hazards clearly are the most significant natural hazard to threaten Monroe County.

The LMS Working Group acknowledges that many buildings were built before the adoption of regulations for development in floodplains in the County and the incorporated municipalities. Current regulations require new development to be designed and built to resist anticipated wind and flood hazards. Older buildings, then, may reasonably be expected to sustain more property damage than new buildings.

3.2 The Mitigation Planning Process

The LMS Working Group followed a well-established planning process to revise the LMS. Five meetings were held during which the LMS revision was discussed; meeting agendas and minutes are on file with the OEM:

- **February 15, 2005.** Overview of the process to revise the LSM, summarize hazard events that have occurred since 1999, review the mitigation goals, and request that Work Group members review and report on mitigation activities initiated or completed since 1999.
- **March 24, 2005.** Discussed rationale for designating facilities as critical, important or standard; data to be gathered for critical facilities; a database of

potential and past mitigation actions to simplify tracking; and options for simplifying the process to put projects on the list and prioritizing them.

- **May 24, 2005.** The LMS met to review the approval and adoption process for the revised LMS and discussed the importance of having adoption scheduled simultaneously in all jurisdictions. The Work Group reviewed the mitigation goals formulated for the 1999 LMS (and made one minor addition) and the process of adoption of a single document by multiple jurisdictions. Importantly, it was decided to revise the process to identify and prioritize initiatives in a two-step process; a tentative schedule was proposed. And finally, the Work Group decided to set as an initiative, completion of the Critical Facilities database.
- **July 20, 2005.** Review public comments; revisit Work Group initiatives; approve LMS Revision and forward it to the State and FEMA for review and subsequently, to governing bodies for formal adoption.

The overall mitigation planning process, summarized below, was facilitated by a mitigation planning consultant:

- **Get Organized.** The Monroe County LMS Working Group was charged with coordinating a committee comprised of County and city representatives to review and revise the LMS.
- **Coordinate.** Prior to the February 15, 2005, meeting, other agencies and other interested organizations were notified of the planning activity and invited to participate.
- **Hold Public Meeting.** The February 15, 2005, meeting of the LMS Working Group was advertised as a public meeting to introduce the process to revise and update the LMS.
- **Identify Hazards.** The LMS Work Group reviewed the hazard identification materials from the 1999 LMS and hazard events that have occurred, and confirmed the priority ranking of natural hazards.
- **Review how Natural Hazards are Addressed.** Work Group members reviewed brief descriptions of their agencies and on-going actions related to hazards and provided updates. The results are summarized in Chapter 6 (Monroe County) and Chapters 8 through 12 for the cities of Key West, Key Colony Beach, Layton, Islamorada and Marathon.
- **Assess Risks.** Summary materials on risks from the 1999 LMS were reviewed and updated by the Work Group members.
- **Confirm the Mitigation Goals.** The mitigation goals were confirmed.
- **Identification of Mitigation Actions.** The list of potential mitigation actions is not static, it changes as new projects are identified, as projects are completed, and as the priorities of proponents change or better information about the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of an activity comes to light. The Work Group concurred

with the importance of improving the method by which the list of actions is maintained and updated periodically.

- **Draft the Revised LMS.** The revised LMS, formulated primarily from the material developed for the 1999 LMS, was prepared in a format designed to fulfill the planning requirements. The draft was circulated to LMS Working Group members and electronic copies were provided to adjacent communities, interested parties, and pertinent state and federal agencies. Comments were collected and incorporated into the “public review” draft.
- **Hold Public Meeting.** Notices of the public meeting and the availability of the Public Review Draft LMS were published in *The Keynoter*, *The Key West Citizen*, *The Upper Keys Reporter*, and *The Free Press Newspaper*, and the Draft LMS was presented at the public meeting held on July 19, 2005.
- **Adopt LMS.** The LMS was presented to the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners and the governing bodies of the Village of Islamorada, the City of Layton, the City of Key Colony Beach, the City of Marathon, and the City of Key West. Copies of the resolutions of adoption are found in Appendix B.

3.3 Public Involvement in Mitigation Planning

Consistent with the standard practices to inform and provide citizens the opportunity to comment, and to fulfill the public involvement requirements of the mitigation planning programs, the input was solicited and residents were notified and invited to review the LMS and attend a public meeting. In January 2004, a letter advising that the County and cities were initiating the planning process, including a public meeting, was sent to selected state and federal government agencies, neighborhood associations and other interested and related organizations.

The first public meeting on February 15, 2005, was advertised in *The Keynoter* and *The Free Press Newspaper* and a notice was posted on the County’s web page. Other than the Work Group members and representatives from a number of non-profit organizations, the meeting was not attended by the general public.

The Monroe County LMS (Public Review Draft) was scheduled for presentation to the public at a meeting on July 19, 2005. Notice of the meeting was published in *The Keynoter*, *Key West Citizen*, *Upper Keys Reporter*, and *The Free Press Newspaper*. Prior to the meeting, copies of the Public Review Draft were made available to the public in the offices of the cities, in the three County public libraries, and posted on the County’s web page. A notification letter was sent to adjacent communities, federal and state agencies, and neighborhood associations. No members of the public attended and no comments were submitted.